

Testimony to Subcommittee from Task Force on Charger Related Issues

Madame Chair and members of the task force. I am Gary Rotto and I chair the Serra Mesa Community Planning Group. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

Serra Mesa is the closest predominately residential community in proximity to the Stadium. Serra Mesa is comprised of several neighborhoods including Birdland, Cabrillo Heights, and Mission Village. Many of the homes were built in the late 1950's, early 60's before the planning of Qualcomm Stadium. According to recent demographic surveys, there are just over 24,000 residents in our community.

Our community was thought of as a residential community to the industrial and commercial area of Kearny Mesa. In the heyday of General Dynamics, many workers lived in Serra Mesa.

Whether the property that comprises Qualcomm Stadium remains as the site for a future stadium or is redeveloped, not in the legal parlance but in practical terms, we have a few central concerns. On your travels to or from events at the Stadium, you may have traveled through our community as so many people do. Maybe you've taken the "backway" home, up Mission Village Drive on your way to Aero Drive, I-805, or 163. Maybe you've parked in the areas and residential community at the top of the hill. I would say that most of the time, we're ok with that ... people are fairly courteous and respectful of the community. But we do bear the brunt of the overflow on football game days and for other near sellout events. The move of the Padres to the downtown ballpark will certainly decrease the wear and tear on the community – including the issue of evening fireworks noise, but we will still have days on which we will "host" spectators to stadium events. At this time, most of us have moved into the community after the

stadium was built and recognize that there are going to be those days.

But the burden is still there. We believe that any plan for this property should include greater care – maintenance for that fact – of the pathways to the stadium. The property cared for by stadium staff is well maintained, with good litter control. But there are other areas that need regular maintenance – such as the north side of Friars Road at ramp from Friars Westbound to Mission Village – and Mission Village itself. The trash cans there are not maintained – they are an eyesore physically and – in accordance with the broken window theory – therefore discourage proper disposal of litter. We need true sidewalks for this pathway – Mission Village from Ronda to the Friars Road ramp. This will enhance this important pathway and entryway to the stadium as well as demonstrate a “good neighbor” policy to the community.

From a land use point of view, we are concerned about the effect that any changes on the stadium property will have on our community – specifically the character of our community. With the changes in the retail marketplace, we are struggling with revitalizing our two village centers. Development in South Kearny Mesa and Mission Valley of course siphon off customers and therefore adversely impact the businesses in Serra Mesa. We desperately need to maintain this character and ask that when you concern the land use intensity of the stadium property, that you consider how this will effect village life in Serra Mesa. We are pleased to welcome Sav-On Pharmacy to the old Henry’s site, but we are very concerned about “leakage” of sales from the community that would prevent Sav-on from being profitable and providing this important amenity to the seniors, non-ambulatory and ambulatory members of our community who desperately need these services and cannot or do not want to drive a distance.

I think that we all acknowledge that our transit program leaves much to be desired. My personal observation is that more people would take the trolley to the stadium if they had a place to park, but there is a dearth of parking structures off site. And our bus service down Mission Village does not even stop at the Stadium trolley station – either on event days or non-event days. I am not necessarily advocating for more buses to travel along Mission Village, but it doesn't make sense that you can't get from one end of Serra Mesa to the other – especially to the Stadium and rather have to drive to a stadium event. We have an adequate bikeway system through our community and urge that biking to stadium events be promoted and installing of additional bikeracks at the trolley station

I think that people in the community agree that all of the stadium property should be considered in a master plan should the land be identified for increased intensity. For example, it is my understanding that the current employee parking lot is targeted for a regional fire station. Is that the best use of that property? How does it effect other parts of the stadium property's usage? Is that the best locale? I also ask that you consider the establishment of some part of the property as an active park. There is certainly a dearth of such space in San Diego and, in particular, in Mission Valley. And our little joint use park at the top of the hill at Juarez Elementary School receives quite a bit of usage from area leagues – both youth and adult leagues - already. The establishment of some public parkland could relieve that stress on the current park usage and may be in keeping with the City's ultimate plans for this site. Thank you again for the opportunity to speak with you.